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ABSTRACT

This book shares the philosophy that what a teacher learned through the martial arts form, Aikido, allowed him to look beyond aggressive acts without responding aggressively himself, viewing the student behind the angry behavior. The teacher notes that compassion works better than any form of discipline he has ever encountered in education. Tao, which means "the way" or "the path" in Chinese, can be the way of anything, such as the way of harmony in Aikido. Tao is something that hones one's spirit and makes one a better person. Teaching is also an important way. This book is intended to re-awaken what the teacher sees as being lost in education: the true meaning behind being a teacher. Teachers are the guides of learning for children and the ones who help children envision their potential and then meet it. The book explains teaching in the Tao, focusing on: compassion and openness, renewal, knowing one another, matters of energy, the importance of creativity, and the master teacher. A glossary is included. (SM)

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Teaching in the Tao

Patrick Christie

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REACHING THEIR HIGHEST POTENTIAL
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Contents

Introduction vi

Teaching in the Tao

- Compassion and Openness 1
- Renewal 21
- Know One Another 36
- Matters of Energy 48
- The Importance of Creativity 56
- The Master Teacher 71

Glossary 82

For Further Information 84

Index 85

Introduction

Tao means "the way" or "the path" in Chinese and is similar to *do* in Japanese. It can be the way of anything, such as the way of harmony (*Aikido*) or the way of writing (*Shodo*). It is more than just a job description or something you do for fun like a hobby—it is an activity that brings out the best in you. It is something that hones your spirit and makes you a better person. Teaching can be "a way" in this sense—an especially important way, since our future is in the hands of our teachers.

But too often teaching is a way that is much maligned, especially in recent years. Not only do we tend to take teachers for granted, but we often mistrust and ridicule them in our society. When you tell people that you teach, often the reply is something like, "Oh, you must really like having summers off," as if you worked part-time or were somehow secretly on the dole.

I had the opportunity as an undergraduate student to spend seven weeks in Oviedo, Spain, teaching English to middle- and high-school students. The treatment that I received as a teacher in that country amazed me. There, a teacher garners the same respect that Americans reserve for doctors of medi-

cine. Spanish people do not say, as so many in this country do, "Those who can't, teach." There, I felt something akin to reverence from the people I met; I can only deduce that this stemmed from entrusting me with their most precious possessions—their children.

In our country I have had adults attempt to make me feel ashamed for choosing teaching as a profession, with comments to the effect that I have it pretty good for only working part-time. The attitude behind these comments might explain the reluctance of many talented people to go into teaching. After all, who wants to be ashamed of what you do?

This book is an attempt to reawaken what I see as being lost in this country, both by teachers and the public in general: the true meaning behind being a teacher. Master Teachers are more than dispensers of knowledge, and certainly more than glorified babysitters. These definitions fall short and are derogatory in their implications both for teachers and students. Teachers are the guides of learning for children, *in loco parentis* in the truest sense; we are the ones who, many hours a day, raise the children of those who entrust them to us. We are sparks that ignite the imagination—we are the ones who help children envision their potential and then meet it. We are the bearers of hope in a country that sometimes seems bereft of it. And like it or not, next to parents, we are probably the most powerful role models that children have.

These are big responsibilities, and teaching is a difficult job. I have spent many years in alternative-education settings and have worked with some very troubled young people. For me it was a lucky coincidence

that I began a study of the martial arts at the same time that I began teaching. My two esteemed teachers are Sensei Roy Suenaka and Sensei Michael Hawley, the *dojo-cho* (head student of *Aikido*) for the Buffalo area. They both stress that as *Aikidoka* (students of *Aikido*), it is our responsibility not to destroy the aggressor but to "take the aggression out of the aggressor." I have tried to take this philosophy with me into the classroom, and on good days I have been able to view the student behind the angry words. *Aikido* has helped me, not because of some macho sense of confidence, but by giving me the ability to look beyond aggressive acts without responding aggressively myself.

This book is a chance to share with other teachers some of the philosophy that I learned through *Aikido*. It also allows me to pass on the one truth that I have learned as a teacher: Compassion works better than any form of discipline I have witnessed in education. It is also meant as a wake-up call. It is a reminder of our responsibility, our personal worth, and the value of what we do.

Teaching is a complex occupation that is all too often not given the credit it is due. A friend of mine once said that he had never thought of teaching itself as an art. It is. It is an art that can be honed and polished just as any other. Like any "way," it can lead you to a deeper understanding of yourself and your place in the universe. It is something that you can master—it is teaching in the Tao.

—*Patrick Christie*

Compassion and Openness

The character on this page represents the idea of "heart open."

The Master Teacher praises students
because he is confident in who he is.
He enjoys their presence
and makes them realize the wonder of themselves.

Don't fall into the trap of finding the negative in your students;
look for the positive and express it to them.
Those who do, teach from the heart, from a center of love.
These teachers know the Tao
and consider their students their children.

Teaching children can be frustrating.
Students occasionally get on your nerves,
but remember they are still children.
Try not to criticize them for being new at this life.

Think back to a teacher you loved as a child.
Do you still remember what she taught?
Why is that? It's probably because she cared about you.
And since she cared about you, you cared about what she taught.
Take a day and teach in the way she taught you!
Continue the goodness that she gave to you
and give it to your children.
When you do this, you bring fulfillment to her teaching.
You plant the seeds of love in the hearts of your children.

Be open.

When a child is aggressive and overbearing, don't shut him out.
He is calling out for help!
Talk to him privately and get to the heart of the matter.
It is too easy to give up because a student is "bad."
Be stronger than that.

Be courageous and strong in your classroom—
no one respects a milksop!
But what is courage? And what kind of strength?
The uninformed call it indulgence.
The ignorant call it weakness.
It is having the strength to be kind.
It is having the courage to be gentle.
It is being strong enough to listen to your children
and hear what they have to say.

15

Laugh!

Who wants to go to a class that is so tense
that no one dares laugh?
If something is funny, laugh out loud!
True laughter is an expression of our humanity—
become human right before your children's eyes!

Teach respect by being respectful.
Demand that your children listen attentively when you speak
but do the same when they speak!
Listen closely to hear and understand them.

17

If children come to you with a problem, don't trivialize it.
It may seem small to you but it's very big for them.
So listen with compassion.
Hug them if they are crying.
Some of them have no one at home to listen to their problems,
so give them what they need—an adult to listen to them.
It may be hard, but just think of the difference
you'll make in their lives!

Some say that students are worse than they have ever been.
If so, it is very seductive to give up on students
because they are incorrigible.
Nothing you do will ever make a difference in such a world—
so why try?
Can you see the hidden danger in such a mindset?
Can you see the trap of futility?
Yet as teachers we may hear such statements frequently.
Can anything be done?

Change your worldview.
Maybe students have always been like this.
Some adults have always commented
on how bad young people are becoming.
If so, there is no more room for excuses!
Simply ask yourself what sort of teacher would you rather be:
One who uses excuses or one who changes lives?

Your students do need your love, even if they act like they don't.
If they reject you they are merely frightened of connecting.
Don't reject them back.
Despite how much love you show another,
it isn't always understood or returned.
Some of these children have been cruelly manipulated by those
who said they loved them; your actions may really scare them.
Just be aware of this possibility and be compassionate.

If you follow the Tao, students will naturally come to you
to discuss their problems.

That's OK.

But don't fool yourself
and pretend you are something that you are not—
if your students need help,
you must direct them to the appropriate person.
This can be a counselor or a principal.
Don't try to be everything for them!
Listen attentively,
then send them to the person who can best help.

Be flexible—

don't be critical if one of your children
says something very strange.
Hear her out—
she may be looking at the world in a new way!
The key is complete listening, and it takes practice.

22

Hold no grudges.

Try not to remain angry with a child.
Open your heart!
Let it go!
See the child as needing help, and your anger should fade.

Before bed every night unburden any anger
that may be lurking in your soul.
If there is a student who needs your attention,
then make a note of it and talk to him tomorrow.
Don't let it go and "forget about it," because it will not go away.
Search out that student tomorrow and say,
"I'm upset about what happened. Can we talk about it?"

Don't be afraid of tears.
I recall a teacher who stopped reading a beautiful novel in class
because it made some students cry.
How sad.
Emotions will come out in enlightening experiences.
Accept them as natural and human, not something to be avoided.

Who in your class has the most to teach you?
Who will teach you your boundaries
and what you need to learn about being human?
Who is the one that will push you to enlightenment?
Often it's the student who is the biggest problem.

It's the pain in the neck.

If you can find a way to accept her importance
you are on your way!
It might help to know that she desperately needs you.
Find a way to find your way, together.

Demand respect in your classroom for all present.
Make it a safe place to be.
Don't allow predatory behavior.
There's a line between openness and anything goes;
if someone's feelings are hurt that line has been crossed.
Clearly state that everyone has the right to speak his or her mind
in your room,
but cheap shots and ridicule of others are not to be tolerated.
Everyone has a right to feel safe.

27

Be especially kind to the parents of children with difficulties.
Be slow to judge parents struggling through life on their own.
Their lives are often hard—
be gentle with them all.

To be one with the Tao is to avoid critically judging students
and to relate to them as viable human beings.
Remember those who judged you as "not up to snuff"
when you were small?
How did it make you feel?
Were they right?
Remember this before you judge a child.

Renewal

The character on this page represents the idea of "Tao."

If you became a teacher for short hours and long vacations
and you are unhappy with the job—*quit!*
Your life is calling you, answer the door!
Don't torture yourself or those around you
by your mistake in choosing this profession.
Look inside yourself—
find your strengths and take them where they are leading you.

If you are questioning whether you can handle the profession,
if it's a lot harder than you ever thought,
if you feel frustrated and tired—
take a mental time out.

Remember what brought you here,
the love of children and education.
Look for positives in your students and tell them.
Change one or two things you are doing in your classroom
to make it more child focused and positive.
Take a class in education and reawaken the spark within you.

22

If your administrator hides in his office,
find a way to drag him out!
Show him the good things that you are doing in your classroom
and renew the spark in his soul!
Request that he come to your classroom anytime he wants.
Invite him there out of the blue
to see the wonderful things happening in his school.

33

Great teachers are those who have the ability to merge
the love of their subject with their love of their students.
If you have forgotten how great your subject is,
re-learn it.
Take a class, read new material,
renew the spark of it in your soul.
Then bring it to the classroom.

24

Never rely on last year's work—
take what is good from it and throw out the rest.
If you find yourself in a rut, throw it all out and start over fresh.
The Great Teachers
always find something new and interesting in their material.

35

This Tao seems absurd to those who are not ready for it,
but for those who are, it is like coming home.
It is a welcome validation
of what you always knew in your being.
Teaching should be fun, meaningful, and fulfilling
because you are helping children become who they are.
To watch them grow and mature is a joy.

26

Teach morals by your behavior
because you are a role model to your children.
Do the right thing for their sake.
If you are unsure of your behavior, ask yourself,
"Would I want my children to know I do this?"
"Would I like my children to see me this way?"
Then if you need to change, change!

You are the culmination of your actions.
If your actions come from the heart,
if they have the welfare of the students at their center,
they will love and respect you.
They will say, "Yeah, I had Ms. Rodriguez.
She really made a difference in my life!"

28

Don't pretend to know the mind of God!
Don't pretend to know everything.
I know that many students expect their teachers
to be all-knowing—
be happy to disappoint them.
Constantly improve your knowledge and teaching skills
and you won't need to pretend.

29

Teaching fads are like
the sit-up devices and diet "miracles" sold on cable TV.
Don't look for a magic bullet—
the key to good teaching is in you.
Good teaching takes years to master, so don't give up!
Just keep learning and improving and enjoy your role.
The rest will follow.

40

30

How do you expect your children to respect you
when you don't know who you are!
Discover yourself as your students discover themselves.
Be daring in your life.
Do something you always wanted to do.
Live life fully and you will be the best teacher you can be.

41

31

Let the world into your classroom
and let your children out into the world.
Discuss what's new; keep up-to-date.
Start an investment club or a global awareness group.
Research climate change.
Do anything that connects your students to the outside world.
Then when they have to leave you, they will be better prepared.

42

Some bemoan technology.
Use it.
Do you think your children hate it?
They love it.
Learn to see the beauty of it through their eyes.
Use it as a gateway to the world.

33

If you walk down the halls and see children's work
hanging on the walls,
you know that teacher is proud of her students.
Acknowledging effort in this way
makes even older students feel good about their work.
Try it if you never have.
The look on your students' faces will be a joy for all of you.

Know One Another

The character on this page represents the idea of "chaos," where possibilities are born.

Einstein never created anything.
He never earned a patent.
Yet he changed our world.
His teachers said of him, "He will never amount to anything."
What if he is sitting in your class today?
Get to know your students so well that this doesn't happen.
Be careful not to cast him out again!

No matter what anyone says, it's OK to be liked as a teacher.
From fondness comes trust.
From trust comes openness of expression.
From openness comes true learning.

I have heard adults say that to apologize is to be weak.
Nothing could be further from the truth!

Everybody makes mistakes, and everyone has bad days.
If you feel bad about something you said or did,
then apologize for it.
This is the only way to build an honest relationship
with your students.
Don't expect perfection from yourself.
Don't delude your students into thinking you're perfect—
it will only lead to pain.
Better just to be human!

Know your students as well as you would any friend.
Build understanding and communication between you
so that a small occurrence, like a student speaking out of turn,
is seen as a minor, not a major offence.
It seems simple, but to be a good teacher
you must get to know your students.
When you truly know your students, and they truly know you,
you can accept one another. Once you accept one another,
the journey that is learning can begin!

Talk about your students' beliefs—any one that comes up!
What a plethora of beauty and creativity there is in

Christianity,
Buddhism,
Judaism,
Shintoism,
Taoism,
Islam,
Hinduism,
Atheism,
and Agnosticism.

Have classes on them!

Research ones that you are unfamiliar with
and have your children do the same.
These are all beliefs that shape our lives; they merit study!

50

Don't be afraid to share who you are with your children.
If you share who you are with your students,
they will see you as a person.
Talk about your family, your hobbies,
the big fish you caught over the weekend.
Have pictures that archive your life
hanging in your room or on your desk.
Be a real person to them.

51

40

Keep open so you may know your students.
Don't look for trouble in every student, but trust your instincts.
If something seems amiss with a student, TALK to him—
you might just be the person
who diffuses a potentially dangerous situation.

52

Parents don't allow their child to be picked on—
don't let it happen in your classroom!
Some children are good at hiding suffering:
Keep your eyes, ears, and heart open!
If you sense that something is wrong, it probably is!

Your students need to understand the power they have
to change their own lives.
Empower them with this knowledge,
and you have done your job.
You can now go home!

54

Education is the choice of each student.
Remember that no one can force anyone to learn.
You must make education meaningful so that your students will choose to learn.

To say that everyone is unique is not a cliche; it's the truth.
Have a classroom that allows individuals
to be accepted for who they are.

56

Matters of Energy

The character on this page represents the idea of "chi," or life energy.

We are beings of energy—
study that energy right in your own classroom.
What kind of energy is happening in your room?
What kind of mood is being set?
Happy, sad, content, morose, blissful, or critical?
How can you make it more positive?
Reach out to students and accept them.
You will bring positive energy to your room.

The stars have their influence on each other.
Our star affects our world and the many other worlds that circle it.
The moon has its effect on our world.
These are matters of energy affecting energy.

We are the same.
Everything you do in the classroom has an effect on your students.
You are like the sun—your students circle you
and are directly influenced by your every move.
The sun doesn't judge, giving to all equally.
The sun brings enjoyment and enlightens all.

If you were abused in your education,
stop the abuse with you.
Don't continue the cycle.

60

Mind your emotions!
When you feel angry, recognize it,
and ask yourself why you feel this way.
Is it that you are merely not getting your way or what you want?
If students are not doing their work,
it may be because they don't see the value in it . . . show them!
Don't waste energy getting angry.
Take a deep breath . . .
reassess the situation . . .
and do the right thing,
even if it involves scrapping your carefully laid plans.

61

Band with positive colleagues.
Together become involved
in the educational mission of your school.
You may disagree on what and how,
but if you all act from a center of love and concern for children
the right course of action will unfold.

Did you ever walk into a classroom or meeting
in which criticism and put-downs were acceptable?
What did it feel like?
Negative energy controls the atmosphere and feeds on itself
until the air feels thick with it—
your hair might even bristle.

Compare this to a room that fosters positive energy,
where people are praised for their merits—
a place without finger-pointing,
a place where problems are not petted, but solved.
Positive energy reigns;
you can tell by the laughter
and the joy of accomplishment found here.

Don't allow put-downs or other destructive behavior
into your room—they are manifestations of negative energy.
Be a positive force!
Find the good in your students
and have them find the good in themselves:
You will be able to feel the difference.

The Importance of Creativity

The character on this page represents the idea of "the creative."

What is creativity?
Creativity is a courageous pursuit of the true self.
To be creative is to walk towards yourself and say,
"Oh, there you are!"
To be creative is to slap yourself awake:
to awaken your true nature,
to become who you are,
to finally come home to yourself.

The most important aspect of learning is creativity.
Creativity is the blossoming of our souls.
Don't quash this in anyone; nurture it!
Allow creative expression, and your students will love you for it.

Don't be seduced by the need to test.
Your state may require your students to take certain tests,
but don't "teach to the test."
It will only make your students hate school!
Students are fine just the way they are—
build on what they do well.
If you build on their strengths they will do just fine on tests.
Find out what they like and let them write about it,
read about it, do math equations with it, or paint it.
Help them appreciate their good qualities
so they can take them into the future.

Some in education speak of children as "products"
and stress quality in production.

Be wary.

Remember, children are not widgets or cogs,
they are fledgling humans . . .
to objectify them is to strip them
of the most essential part of their being.

If an analogy is needed, try one with life in it:
They are flowers just beginning to bloom.

Would a gardener find fault with her sunflowers
for growing too quickly?
Would she chastise her begonias because they were too short?
Would she plant her impatiens in full sun
and find fault with them for wilting?
Would she plant her cactus in water
and wonder why it didn't thrive?
Of course not.
The Master Gardener has studied the way of gardening
and knows that all flowers have different needs.

It is the same with your students.
Find out what they need and give it to them.
Allow them to bloom and then tend to them.
If a student needs more light, more sound, more movement,
more voice, more feeling, more vision—
give it to him, and watch him thrive.

We must have our children envision the future
realistically and proactively.
The future will have problems, as today.
Have your children discover in themselves
the ability to solve these problems:

What will we do if oil runs out?
What if someone invents "smart pills"
and school becomes obsolete?
What might we do if the weather dramatically changes?
What might world governments look like in 50 years?
How could we become a truly "paperless" society?

Solve problems in the classroom
so our children are ready to solve them in the future.

71

Become a creativity spotter.

Watch carefully as your students work on projects.
Find something truly unique in what they are doing
especially in the beginning stages
and leave "constructive criticism" until later.
This takes practice, so look hard!
When you see the good in what they are doing,
exclaim, "Great job!"
Say it loudly, because it's for all of you!

Be flexible in how you assess—
don't assume that a test measures the level of understanding
a child has on a subject.
Let her prove her knowledge in a variety of ways.
She could perform a song, make a play,
write a television commercial, interview a famous person.
The choices are limited only by imagination . . .

There are whole books devoted to fostering creativity.
They can be distilled down to this:
Be open and flexible.
If your mind, heart, and spirit are open, you will learn to respect
the creativity in your students and yourself.
You have been studying your subject for a long time—
now do something new, special, and wondrous with it.

Be aware of current creative forces.
Find a way to connect them to what you teach.

Presently you could discuss the importance
of rap or other youth music.
What is its social significance?
Its artistic and linguistic importance?
What does it say for our culture that so many youngsters
are speaking their lives in an accessible poetic form?
What is the math of rap?

It takes a certain amount of creativity and openness
but such a lesson will seriously engage your students.
Try it!
Take the time to connect with them
and acknowledge the importance of their creativity.

62

The double helix structure of DNA can be envisioned
using the image of a winding staircase—
what a wonderful image!
Teach complex things simply.
Use analogies and imagery.
Make up a story.
Make up your own poem or song.

Try a class on new inventions.
Have the students think of something
that really bugs them about modern life.
Then give them the opportunity to imagine a solution.
Some great inventors came across their best ideas this way!

77

Don't be so set in your ways.
There is often no such thing as one "right" answer.
Try not to judge intelligence
by the speediness of "right" answers.
Open your mind.
2+2 doesn't always = 4.
It might be 22.
It might be a nuclear reaction.

78

65

Engage yourself in the activities of your students.
Get messy with them!
Write poetry with your children,
paint with them, and play with them.
Bring play into any class at any level.
You will discover each other in your play,
and then learning can begin.

79

The Master Teacher

The character on this page represents the idea of "crisis," in which both danger and opportunity are present.

80

It is easy to spot the Master Teacher!
She is loved by her students and respected by the right-minded.
She accomplishes wonderful things in her room.
Her students say of her:
We learned the whole time in her room and never knew it!
She is not overbearing and bossy, but gentle and guiding.
Since her students want to learn, they don't think of it as "learning."
She has the joy of one who loves her work,
and children like being in her class.

There are too few Master Teachers—
complacency and negativity can kill the Master in the infant stage.
Remember, good enough is neither good or enough.
Strive for greatness!
Be the absolute best teacher you can be!
Soon the desire to be great
will overpower the comfort of being mediocre.

82

View your classroom as a *dojo*—a place of enlightenment.
Don't laugh!
That is exactly what it is, for both you and your children.
It is a place of discovery and self-actualization.
It is a place where you can discover who you are as a teacher.
It is a place where your students can discover
who they are as learners.
It is a place of awakening to the wonders of ourselves and others.

83

What separates the good teachers from the Master?
The Master is passionate about what he teaches
and whom he is teaching.
The Master is burning inside.
His students sense that fire within him
and want to share in the flame.

Many of us have heard the saying,
"One who thinks he knows is a fool."
In education one who thinks she knows everything
about teaching shouldn't be there.
The Master seeks help when she needs it
and doesn't ever "know it all."

If a student is constantly on your nerves, annoying you,
thank him! He is pushing you towards enlightenment!
Don't shut him out; embrace him.
Such students are your personal angels
and their worth is beyond price!
They are the ones who will make you a Master Teacher.
If you can reach them, find a connection with them,
you will no longer see them as "difficult,"
and you can say that you have done your job well.

The Master Teacher knows
a balance needs to be kept in her classroom.
She encourages creativity and critical thinking.
She teaches her students not only how to think
but how to convey thought successfully.

87

Where can democracy be found in our country?
Where can we find an acceptance
of all people of all races, creeds, and lifestyles?
Where can we find the person who will not judge us
for our outward appearance but for our inner character?
Where can we speak our mind without fear of rejection and ridicule?
In the classroom of the Master Teacher.

88

The Master Teacher is a personification of the ideals of democracy:
He is tolerant and nonjudgmental.
He is loving and kind.
He is respected and respectful.
A student in his classes learns by example
what it is to embody the ideals of a democracy.

89

75

A Master Teacher is like the Master Miner.
She doesn't stop to consider the dirty hole in the ground and say,
"Disgusting, I wouldn't be caught dead in there!"
No, the miner goes in and uncovers precious jewels.
Think of the worst student in your class,
the one who gives you the hardest time.
Get to know him, learn to love him, and uncover wonders.

90

Glossary

Aikido ..... Japanese martial art founded by Morihei Ueshiba in 1925. It roughly translates as "the way of harmony." The primary goal of *Aikido* is to defend yourself without doing serious injury to your attacker.

Aikidoka ..... a student of Aikido.

Do ..... Japanese for "the way" or "the path." See *Tao*. It can be adapted to many kinds of ways, such as the way of writing, the way of harmony, and the way of developing peace.

Dojo ..... a place where Japanese martial arts are taught; translates as "place of enlightenment."

Dojo-Cho ..... the head *aikidoka* of an area.

Ki (Japanese) ..... vital or life energy; this energy is a focus in many arts and
or **Chi** (Chinese) healing traditions.

91

Lao-tzu ..... the enigmatic contemporary of Confucius known as the author of the *Tao Te Ching* (the "book of the way"). His name translates as "the Old Master." He is traditionally recognized as the founder of Taoism.

Satori ..... a sudden awakening to truth; the hopeful culmination of any path or way. Eureka!

Shodo ..... the Japanese art of writing or Japanese calligraphy.

Tao ..... Chinese for "the way" or "the path."

Taoism ..... Chinese philosophical and spiritual tradition that emphasizes harmony and balance; by tradition founded by *Lao-tzu* in China in the sixth century BCE.

Tao Te Ching ..... the "book of the way," traditionally attributed to *Lao-tzu*; a philosophical text that promotes compassion, balance, and humility.

Wado-Kai ..... a style of *Aikido*; translates as "the way of developing peace."

For Further Information

For a wonderfully poetic and understandable English version of the *Tao Te Ching*, try:

Mitchell, Stephen. 1991. *Tao Te Ching: A New English Version.* New York: HarperPerennial.

For a comprehensive website on Taoism try:

http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/taoism

For more information on *Wado-kai Aikido*, try these websites:

http://members.xoom.com/wadokainc/

http://www.geocities.com/hawley_14072/aikido.html

http://www.geocities.com/kintora/

93

Index

A-B

A Master Teacher is like the Master Miner, 81
Aikido, vi, viii, 82, 84
Aikidoka, viii, 82
Band with positive colleagues, 53
Be aware of current creative forces, 66
Be courageous and strong in your classroom, 6
Be especially kind to the parents of children with difficulties, 19
Be flexible in how you assess, 64
Be flexible, 13
Be open, 5
Become a creativity spotter, 63
Before bed every night unburden any anger, 15

C-D

Compassion and Openness, 1-20
Demand respect in your classroom for all present, 18
Did you ever walk into a classroom or meeting, 54
Do, 82
Dojo, 74, 82
Dojo-Cho, viii, 82
Don't allow put-downs or other destructive behavior, 55
Don't be afraid of tears, 16
Don't be afraid to share who you are with your children, 42
Don't be seduced by the need to test, 59
Don't be so set in your ways, 69
Don't pretend to know the mind of God, 30

E-F

Education is the choice of each student, 46
Einstein never created anything, 37
Engage yourself in the activities of your students, 70

G-H

Great teachers are those who have the ability to merge, 25
Hold no grudges, 14
How do you expect your children to respect you, 32

I-J

I have heard adults say that to apologize is to be weak, 39
If a student is constantly on your nerves, annoying you, 77
If children come to you with a problem, don't trivialize it, 9
If you are questioning whether you can handle the profession, 23
If you became a teacher for short hours and long vacations, 22
If you follow the Tao, students will naturally come to you, 12
If you walk down the halls and see children's work, 35
If you were abused in your education, 51
If your administrator hides in his office, 24
Importance of Creativity, The 56-70
It is easy to spot the Master Teacher, 72

K-L

Keep open so you may know your students, 43
Ki or *Chi*, 82
Know One Another, 36-47
Know your students as well as you would any friend, 40
Lao-tzu, 83
Laugh, 7
Let the world into your classroom, 33

94

M-N

Many of us have heard the saying, 76
Master Teacher, The 71-81
Matters of Energy, 48-55
Mind your emotions, 52
Never rely on last year's work, 26
No matter what anyone says, it's OK to be liked as a teacher, 38

O-P

Parents don't allow their child to be picked on, 44

Q-S

Renewal, 21-35
Satori, 83
Shodo, vi, 83
Some bemoan technology, 34
Some in education speak of children as "products," 60
Some say students are worse than they have ever been, 10

T-U

Talk about your students' beliefs—any one that comes up, 41
Tao or *Do*, vi, viii, 2, 12, 20, 27, 82, 83
Tao Te Ching, 83, 84
Taoism, 41, 83, 84
Teach morals by your behavior, 28
Teach respect by being respectful, 8
Teaching children can be frustrating, 3
Teaching fads are like, 31
The double helix structure of DNA can be envisioned, 67
The Master Teacher is a personification of the ideals of democracy, 80
The Master Teacher knows, 78
The Master Teacher praises students, 2
The most important aspect of learning is creativity, 58
The stars have their influence on each other, 50
There are too few Master Teachers, 73
There are whole books devoted to fostering creativity, 65
Think back to a teacher you loved as a child, 4
This Tao seems absurd to those who are not ready for it, 27
To be one with the Tao is to avoid critically judging students, 20
To say that everyone is unique is not a cliche; it's the truth, 47
Try a class on new inventions, 68

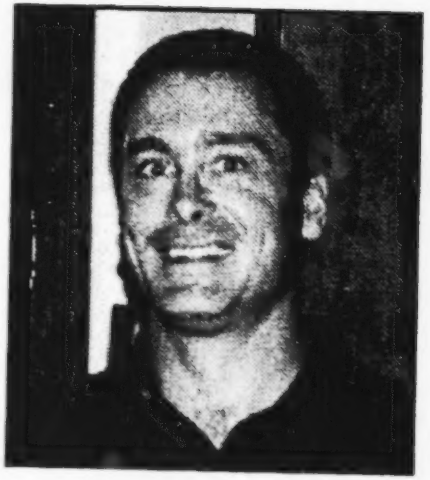
V-W

View your classroom as a *dojo*—a place of enlightenment, 74
Wado-Kai, 83, 84
We are beings of energy, 49
We must have our children envision the future, 62
What is creativity, 57
What separates the good teachers from the Master, 75
Where can democracy be found in our country, 79
Who in your class has the most to teach you, 17
Would a gardener find fault with her sunflowers, 61

X-Z

You are the culmination of your actions, 29
Your students do need your love, even if they act like they don't, 11
Your students need to understand the power they have, 45

About the Author



For the past decade, ***Patrick Christie*** has taught high-school English in alternative settings serving at-risk students. He is currently finishing a certificate in Creative Problem Solving at Buffalo State College. His serious study of the martial arts began about ten years ago, coinciding with the start of his teaching career. In the time since, he has earned his *shodon* (first-level black belt) in *Wado-Kai*, a form of the martial art *Aikido*; he continues to study Aikido at the Kin-Tora Fitness Center in Buffalo, New York. He writes poetry about his family, Aikido, work, and life. His latest obsession is playing chess with his wife Kathleen and their four children—Molly, Patrick, Liam, and Seamus.

96

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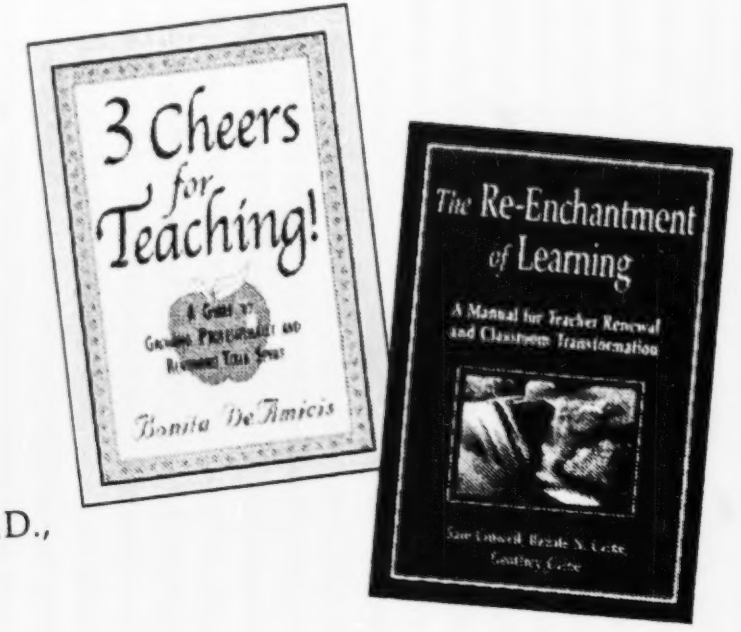
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Teachers are the guides of learning for children, *in loco parentis* in the truest sense; we are the ones who, many hours a day, raise the children of those who entrust them to us . . . For me it was a lucky coincidence that I began a study of the martial arts at the same time that I began teaching. *Aikido* has helped me, not because of some macho sense of confidence, but by giving me the ability to look beyond aggressive acts without responding aggressively myself . . . This book is a chance to share with other teachers some of the philosophy that I learned through *Aikido*. It also allows me to pass on the one truth that I have learned as a teacher: Compassion works better than any form of discipline I have witnessed in education. It is also meant as a wake-up call. It is a reminder of our responsibility, our personal worth, and the value of what we do.

—from the Introduction

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